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A Kentucky Artist and a Federal Program: Frank Long and the Treasury Section of Fine Arts

Sue B. Beckham

In 1940 Kentucky's foremost artist, Berea resident Frank Long, painted a mural for the new Berea Post Office. It was the last and one of the least of the artist's government commissions, but in many ways it was his most successful. The gaily colored mural (Fig. 1) depicts an "Old Time Commencement" at Berea College with all the activities associated with that celebration at the turn of the century. Unlike many college towns, Berea in the early days experienced no town-gown split, and its commencement at the beginning of summer was a time of community celebration, not only for the townspeople but for rural folk from miles about, as well. The commencement festivities on the Berea Commons were reportedly attended by five thousand people and no fewer than two thousand horses.

In his mural, Long painted a series of vignettes more evocative of a county fair than an academic ritual. On commencement day, people came to meet friends, to swap horses, pistols, knives—practically anything that could be swapped—to engage in basket lunch auctions, to dance away the evening to fiddlers' tunes and, behind the trees, to buy and drink moonshine. This mural and the events leading up to its installation offer a paradigm of success for the New Deal program to decorate new federal buildings with high quality art meaningful to the people; and the Depression career of its creator, Frank Long, is a paradigmatic example of the workings of the largest public art program ever attempted in the United States.

Most people associate government art during the Great Depression with the Works Progress Administration—the WPA—and most think Depression post office murals were WPA projects. They thought so in the 1930s, and they do so today: a recent Courier-Journal article on Long's murals in the Louisville Post Office attributes them to the relief agency. Actually, however, this largest American effort to raise consciousness through indigenous mural art was sponsored by an altogether different agency—one
for which relief proved only an incidental function.

In the 1930s, one percent of all federal building funds was set aside for "embellishment" of those buildings. At the height of the Depression, art loving associates of President Roosevelt convinced him and the Treasury Department that the best use for those funds would be an effort to develop an American mural tradition similar to the one in Mexico whose best known practitioners were Diego Rivera and José Orozco. Thus, the Section of Fine Arts was established under the auspices of the Treasury Department.

In less than a decade of existence, the Section decorated over twelve hundred buildings, most of them small town post offices such as the one in Berea. And Frank Long decorated six of those buildings—at least as many as any other artist who painted for the Section. In the process, Long experienced both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Section competition system. Among his Section murals are some of the most effective that the program sponsored as well as several the artist himself now regards less happily. Long is also representative in that he, like many other artists, used a program in no way intended for relief as a livelihood through Depression hard times. An examination of Long's career as a Section artist reveals much about the agency that employed him and equally much about a fine Kentucky artist.

In the 1930s, Long was a prominent easel painter whose private work is today being rediscovered. Now, however, he is a successful lapidary and jewelry maker in New Mexico. At eighty-two, he plans, when his hands and eyes will no longer handle the intricacy of his craft, to return to his art, easel painting. Meanwhile he writes, "At present, I cannot mix the two media. When I paint, I become so emotionally absorbed that I cannot put it aside for another kind of creative activity." He long ago became a craftsman, because his experience with government patronage and private commissions taught him that depending on painting for a living too much restricted his creative process and thus debilitated his spirit.

As a successful lapidary jeweler, Long can anticipate a comfortable retirement not dependent on custom work. He has not always had that option. Born in Tennessee in 1906, the son of an artist who spent his last years painting in Kentucky, Frank Long began his career over a half century ago in the tradition of the pre-Depression American artist. He studied first at the Art Institute of Chicago and then made the obligatory trip to Paris to study in
the shadow of the old masters. Before he had learned all he hoped, however, the Depression intervened, and he had to return home to work for a living. Shortly after his return, needing money to live on, Long accepted a commission in a field he had never intended to pursue. He was hired by a Chicago millionaire and sometimes playboy to decorate his recreation room with gay and humorous murals. While these private murals were well received and Long remembers their execution as the most fun he had ever had producing murals, no further commissions were available in Depression-ravished Chicago. But Long had learned one important lesson: he could earn a living painting murals. Down but by no means out, he moved to Kentucky where his father employed him to help with a mural sequence for a Lexington movie house.

While working on that sequence, the elder Long was approached by a Berea cabinet maker wanting to learn to paint, but since the master never took pupils, he referred the applicant to his more talented son. Frank Long loyally denies having more ability than his father, but critics disagree. It was a fortuitous circumstance. Not only did the would-be apprentice, Bert Mullins, learn to paint; he and his teacher became such fast friends that it was not long before they shared a Berea studio neither could have afforded alone. There, too, each would eventually execute murals for the Section. And there, after Mullins had moved into his own house with a studio on the premises, Long would design the Berea mural.

But the luxury of a private loft was still in the future for Frank Long when he was helping to decorate the Lexington theater. Once the job with his father was finished, private commissions in Kentucky also dried up. Thus, again at an economic impasse, Long sought and received his first government commission. He was hired by the Public Works of Art Project—a short lived Treasury relief endeavor—to paint two murals for the Browsing Room in the new University of Kentucky library. Long has always believed that, except for Berea Commencement, his earliest murals were his best. Indeed they were, and these two 1936 murals are a part of that achievement. Fit into arched panels and reflecting the curvature of the architecture, these murals depict middle America at work and at play. The one features sturdy, musclebound men hard at healthy, physical labor. In the other (Fig. 2), male and female dancers swirl to the notes of an unseen fiddler. The murals still adorn the Margaret I. King Library, although unfortunately
not the “Browsing Room.” Today the twin wall decorations no longer complement each other across a hundred feet of casually elegant space. Instead, the room has been transformed into a large unfriendly reading room furnished with hard wooden chairs and equally hard tables, and an architecturally reprehensible “space utilization” effort has isolated the murals into two separate offices. Though these rooms are grand as offices go, they do not permit even those fortunate enough to occupy them a proper perspective on the murals. Still the library is proud of the murals, and workers are friendly so that a diligent visiting scholar can usually wangle a private viewing.

Although Long still wonders why he never painted for the less restrictive WPA, one suspects that the little he earned on portraits and easel paintings sold to private collectors rendered him ineligible for the stringent WPA poverty requirements; moreover, once the Section was organized late in 1936, it offered much more prestige. Whatever the reason, Long entered one of the Section’s early competitions—to decorate the new Marine Hospital in Louisville. According to the system, competitions were held to select an artist to decorate a single building with large spaces, and they were supported by a commensurately large appropriation. Although only one entrant could win, others who submitted commendable designs but did not win were nevertheless awarded other, smaller projects.

Long did not win the Marine Hospital competition, but his entry was so well received that he was offered a post office mural project—not a small, rural post office but Louisville’s sumptuous new post office with its high ceilings, elegant chandeliers, and brass and marble fittings. The project—ten panels—was great enough and lucrative enough that Long hired three assistants to help with its execution. One of the assistants, of course, was his studio mate and pupil Bert Mullins. Unfortunately, though competition records in the National Archives are complete, no information concerning Section or community response to the Louisville Post Office project survives.6

What does survive, however, are the panels themselves. Long considers this sequence his best mural work, and a glance at representative samples (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) easily reveals his talent for adapting locally appropriate subject matter to architectural spaces. The ten spaces for which Long was asked to design, all just under the ceiling in the spacious central foyer of the building, fall
into two geometrical categories: the crescent and the rectangle. Six of them were crescent shaped, and four were extremely long, narrow horizontal panels. Long chose typical Kentucky scenes—fox hunting, mining, livestock raising, tobacco farming, and fishing in the Ohio River for the horizontal panels. And for the crescents, he selected scenes related to mail delivery—a mule-riding country mail carrier, for example, and postmen retrieving mail from a city mail box backed by skyscrapers and busy pedestrians.

Working with the long, narrow panels equipped the artist for a challenge he would face repeatedly in his work for the Section. Most post office mural spaces were in the range of twelve feet by five feet. These were nearer fifteen by four—a very awkward shape to plan. A look at Long's livestock farming panel (Fig. 3), however, reveals his expertise at filling the space while keeping it interesting and lively. Although the whole panel is horizontal—the house, the barn, the sheep, the pigs, and even the people who move across the panel—the movement does not get monotonous. Long relieved the monotony by describing an arch within the rectangle. The low points of the arch are marked by the dog and sheep at each end; the upward curve moves through the heads of the stooped man at the right and the bent one at the left and continues through the standing men and the horse's head to culminate at the top of the silo. The overall impression is one of movement, industry, abundance, and confidence. Not only is the panel well designed, it provides a message of hope for Depression torn postal customers.

In the crescent panels, the design is just the opposite. While the obvious forms reflect the curvature of the architectural space, the curve is counterbalanced with rectangles that keep the design from rushing out of the frame. In the mural of the horse-drawn rural mail wagon (Fig. 4), the heads of the horse and dog, the slightly curved roof of the wagon, and the arched outline of the mailboxes accentuate the curve which is, of course, repeated in the wheels, the horse's rear, and the carrier himself. The rectangular door and window of the wagon as well as the sturdy farmhouse in the background, on the other hand, lend stability to the picture. The mail wagon, by the way, is repeated in Long's later small post office mural for Morehead and Mullins's for Morganfield (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11), and the careful observer will notice that the panel is not without its private joke. On one of the mailboxes, its first letter hidden by the other boxes is ...ullins. Since one of the
mailbox bears the name of one of Long's assistants, Mullins, the names Clark and Moore on the remaining boxes must belong to the other two. The Louisville Post Office has moved to new steel and glass quarters, but the old building is a registered landmark, and thus its aesthetics may not be altered. These murals should, therefore, fare better than those in Lexington.

The Section of Fine Arts was indeed a boon to a talented young muralist. Although economic relief was not foremost in the Section's plans, employment was what it offered Frank Long and many other capable artists who painted its murals. Once Long learned the tricks of painting for the Section, all he had to do to support himself as an artist was to design decorations for competitions and do it better than almost anyone else. He found he could get appointments—no questions about his financial resources asked.

The first competition Long entered led to an unqualified success, even though he did not win. The second was a fiasco—for him and for every other artist who submitted designs. If the Marine Hospital competition worked according to plan and the Berea competition exemplified the Section at its best, the one for Jackson, Mississippi illustrates the worst the Section could do. Section competitions, so far as possible, were to be run and judged by committees of local art patrons. The idea seemed sound—unless, as in the Jackson competition, one member died suddenly before the committee even met, and by the time the entries were ready to be judged, the chair himself met an untimely end. Those events, discouraging though they were, did not halt the competition plan. After a brief mourning period, a new committee headed by the wife of the deceased chair convened. The committee found few entries overall and still fewer suitable for a major federal commission.

The Section hoped to appoint artists cognizant of the region in which the mural was to be placed. In the South, that was always difficult since the art climate in the poorest part of the nation was not encouraging. Few universities had art departments and few Southern cities had museums or galleries where artists could show. Those museums the South could boast of in such cities as Atlanta and Richmond were wary of "modern art" and specialized in "old masters"—works frequently not so masterful, though old and European. Thus most talented artists left the South for the more fertile regions of New York, Chicago, and the Southwest. A few
first rate artists such as Hobson Pittman, LaMar Dodd, and Charles Shannon stubbornly stayed South and tried to build an art establishment among their compatriots, but most of them were too busy trying to promote art in the South to enter Section competitions. And they were probably scared away by such fiascos as the Jackson competition. Frank Long himself had planned to go to New York but stayed in Kentucky only because he found Berea exceptionally congenial. Moreover, he was willing to adapt to the idiosyncrasies of the Section.

After due deliberation, the Jackson committee, according to Section instructions, arranged its five favorite designs in numerical order. Its first choice, and a design which all members agreed was worthy of the art world and their new federal courthouse, happened to be by a Mississippi artist—although the committee would not have known its origin since the competitions were anonymous and entries were identified only by number. Unfortunately, the Section did not agree with the committee’s selection. In fact, it rejected the committee’s first, second, and third choices in favor of the fourth.

The design the Jackson committee had ranked fourth, and the one it believed the Section to have chosen, was attributed to Frank Long. Clearly, that design (Fig. 5) is not Long’s work—it is a stilted, artificial, stylized rendering of an historical topic (the Conquistadors). This presumed Long entry had been a reluctant fourth choice of the committee, selected only because it had difficulty finding five designs it could recommend. Its fourth and fifth choices had been named out of duty. Then, the Section selected the fourth choice! Much in the correspondence suggests that the Section, in fact, was not looking at the same design as the committee. Washington may indeed have chosen a design by Frank Long. Considering the problems faced by the Jackson committee, it is possible that two designs were somehow given the same number or that the actual Long was lost.

Naturally, the volunteer committee, which had spent long uncompensated hours on this problem, took offense in the face of apparent government disdain—a situation in which Southerners had found themselves time and again since 1865. In the opinion of the committee, the violent design of the Conquistadors was most inappropriate. In order to keep peace with Jackson, the Section, unaware that the committee was evidently looking at a design different from the one chosen, offered a compromise. The top five
artists would be asked to design a second entry and take part in a limited competition. All of the artists complied. Again, the committee ranked the entries, putting the same Mississippi artist at the top. The Section, however, rejected all five sketches. It stated that none was suitable, giving as its reason for rejecting the Mississippi entry that it was more suitable as a textile design. A photograph of this submission, however, reveals that although it was stylized, it was nevertheless appropriate for a mural. Unfortunately, it was not appropriate for a Section mural.

The Section, despite conscientious efforts to recognize all types of art, always favored “American Scene” painting—recognizable working class figures involved in pursuits that Depression America could readily identify with amidst familiar landscapes and buildings—designs such as Frank Long submitted in the Vicksburg, Mississippi competition, depicting the arrival of that city’s earliest settlers (Fig. 6), and such as he painted for Crawfordsville, Indiana (Fig. 7). Long considered both of these designs from his later Section career to be inferior work—and he did them only to support himself and his widowed mother.

If an artist was good at it, American scene murals were indeed satisfying for small town America, but too often the Section opted for mediocre American scenes over better designed but more abstract work—so much for its declared aim to commission the best American artists. For Jackson, finally, the Section appointed an American painter of Russian birth and Connecticut residency—making enemies of the art elite in Jackson, Mississippi and probably discouraging Southern artists from entering Section competitions.

All five artists who designed twice for the Jackson competition and were turned down twice must have been furious, but Long was the only one who expressed his chagrin to the Section. He wrote that, while he agreed none of the second group of entries was very strong, the circumstances might have had something to do with the less favorable designs. And then he reminded the government officials of a recent situation written up in a Section Bulletin in which

you speak of meeting with a group of competitors in Chicago, who had submitted sketches in several competitions for Illinois Post Offices, over which your fellow members of the Section were “all but in despair.” You offered these artists
suggestions which they accepted and presumably found valuable in recreating their first conceptions. Why cannot the same help be extended to us artists in this present situation?7

Why indeed? No one will know, but for Frank Long, the Jackson competition was not a total loss. As was the case with the Louisville murals, he secured an alternate commission—he was asked to paint three panels for Hagerstown, Maryland. By that time, however, Long was already suffering from “mural burnout.” He had designed for an ideal space and a fee of three thousand dollars. He got a restricted space and nine hundred dollars. It is no wonder that his murals for Hagerstown (Fig. 8) lack the life and excitement of the ones in Louisville. While these still reflect the architecture—square and finite—they have neither the movement nor the aesthetic appeal of his earlier wall paintings.

Long never considered himself a muralist. He saw himself as an easel painter. He turned to murals because he needed money, and, since he had mastered the tricks that would please the Section, he could depend on those commissions where, in thirties Kentucky, money for other kinds of art was scarce. So he painted murals, but he never found the restrictions of the mural form congenial:

Mural painting [he writes] can be a spontaneous form of expression only under certain special conditions which very seldom exist. Very accurate and fully developed sketches showing the artist’s exact intentions must normally be presented for approval by any prospective patron. When approved, they must be followed exactly in the finished work, for which a “cartoon” to exact size must be prepared to transfer the outlines of the design to the wall or canvas. All these indirect procedures tend to become a dulling process. . . . There is also the requirement that the painting must harmonize with the interior as well as with the preconceived ideas of those who officially judge the work.8

Even so, Long, still needing to eat, accepted a commission for the post office in Morehead, Kentucky, where he encountered some of those very difficulties with the preconceived ideas of the patron. He submitted a design entitled “Rural Free Delivery” (Fig. 9) and was sharply reprimanded by the Section for insensitivity. Long, it seemed, should know better than to present women as

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the people of Morehead might feel they were being mocked by the mother’s obesity, and no daughter of a Kentucky mountain family should be so seductive. To his credit, Long shot back a reply reminding the Section that he lived in the Kentucky mountains and knew what the women looked like. The old ones were indeed sorry to look at. He said he defied anyone to distinguish a young mountain girl from her city counterpart on any basis other than clothing:

The secret of the difference here between youth and age [he wrote] is the hellish existence most of these mountain farmwives endure. It puts lumps where once were curves. If they happen to get fat, as did this old girl, the cause is glandular; not luxurious living. It was this contrast I had in mind when I . . . made the sketch.  

Having defended his interpretation, however, Long slimmed down his matron and made his ingenue more plain—like many other artists who painted murals, he needed the money, and he wished to keep the assignments coming. But in Berea, it was different. Berea was small, and for several years it had been Frank Long’s home town. There in the studio they shared, Bert Mullins learned from his mentor the secrets of painting for the Section, and while Long painted his “Rural Free Delivery” for Morehead, Mullins, now in his own studio, painted one with the same theme and title for Morganfield (Fig. 11). Mullins received as many Kentucky appointments as did Long, but his training was recent, his talent limited, and his desire to decorate the Berea Post Office may have been less intense than that of his mentor. From the time, in 1936, when Long learned that a new post office was to be built in Berea, he wanted to decorate it. He wrote the Section early on that he would paint a Berea Post Office mural for practically nothing if he could be assigned the job. But the Section did not work that way. Just as it had rejected a satisfactory if not superior local artist in Jackson, so it made other plans for Berea.

The Section seldom ran competitions for small towns, but in 1939, it was thirsty for new talent—perhaps others had become burnt out on murals as Long had—so it set up the “Forty-Eight States Competition,” an event whereby a small post office in each state was selected for a competition. Thus, it hoped to uncover unknown artists who might have been too intimidated to compete.
for larger commissions. Berea was the town selected in Kentucky. Artists from the college faculty were asked to run the competition and their chair, Mary Ela, immediately won Section approval by agreeing to serve if she could exhibit the entries for local people and if she could run a one man show of the winner once he was selected. Washington was delighted. Involving local citizens in such projects had been a Section dream from the beginning.

Undaunted by having to compete, Long set out to make sure he won the competition. Not only did he design one of his best efforts, he took into account the architectural restrictions as few artists ever did. New Deal post offices were characterized by a vestibule jutting into the lobby. Since murals in small post offices were invariably placed over the postmaster's door at one end of the lobby, viewers, blocked by the vestibule, could never get a satisfying long distance view of the local art work. For his home town, however, Long designed a mural with a series of small vignettes so that people could stand between the vestibule and the wall and view it one segment at a time. Then to show how the finished mural would work, using the craftsmanship that would later serve him as a jeweler and lapidary, Long constructed a tiny scale model of the post office lobby. The committee was charmed, and so were the townspeople who viewed the exhibition of entries; and so, this time, were Section officials. Although several highly qualified Kentucky artists entered the competition, none had shown Long's determination. The winner was almost a foregone conclusion.

During preparation of the mural, Long saw that local people remained involved. One weekend while he was developing his cartoon, he held an open house in his studio. He let anyone who wanted to do so see the work in progress, listened to their suggestions (though he now confesses he didn't take them too seriously), and let them get to know their own artist. After the open house, townspeople felt so welcome that they occasionally wandered in off the street uninvited to see how their mural was coming. And then, for the first time and only time, Long painted the mural directly on the post office wall. Thus Berea residents could keep track of the mural progress in their daily postal activities. The result was a triangular cooperation between Section, community, and artist such as seldom occurred. It produced a resounding vote of confidence for a benevolent government.

Not only did the mural depict a fond memory of local history,
it featured actual portraits of locally popular citizens. The dulcimer player at the lower right is folk music collector John Jacob Niles, a close friend of Long; the man serving at the lemonade stand is the Berea College plumber, who did indeed man refreshment stands at local gatherings; and the one chatting at the back of the stand, according to Berea Dean Emeritus Louis Smith—though Long denies it—is a portrait of the artist himself.

Not long after the Berea mural was installed in 1940, the spectre of impending war caused government and public enthusiasm for the art project to wane. When war was finally declared, much of the public became antagonistic toward spending government funds on public art. Murals now seemed useless and trivial even though many in government argued the morale value of pictures attesting to the worthiness of the homeland for which American youth was fighting. By early 1942, the Chief of the Section was dying, and so was funding. Section activity was technically suspended, and Frank Long was drafted. Today, Long confesses that he was relieved to trade the restrictions imposed by the mural form for the less restrictive requirements of the camouflage corps—a haven adopted by many Section artists.

The government never resumed its effort to edify and gratify the general populace through art in federal buildings, and Long never painted another mural. But the Section’s achievement remains an important part of the nation’s achievement. Interest in post office murals is keener today than it has been since the Great Depression. And Frank Long bequeathed a legacy of some of the finest Section endeavors to Kentucky—in Lexington, in Louisville, and in Berea.

NOTES

1 Frank Long’s experience with the Treasury Section of Fine Arts in the Jackson, Mississippi and Berea, Kentucky competitions as they pertain to the Section endeavors in the southeastern United States and as they relate to the problems of other artists can be found in Chapter 2 of my forthcoming book from Louisiana State University Press tentatively entitled A Gentle Reconstruction: Depression Post Office Murals and Southern Culture. In Chapter 3, Long’s Morehead, Kentucky project is examined as part of an ongoing problem the Section had with recognizing Southerners as the experts in their region.


Among the artists and art patrons who presented the idea to President Roosevelt and convinced him of its value were George Biddle, artist and bohemian member of the famous Biddle family of millionaires, and Edward Bruce, who would serve as head of the Section of Fine Arts throughout its existence. For the Section, Biddle painted a mural of family life which still decorates the Interior Building in Washington.

Frank Long to Sue Bridwell Beckham, undated letter (early 1984). Unless otherwise noted, information on Long’s plans, opinions, and recollections are drawn from my three-year correspondence with the artist. I cite particular letters only when I quote directly from them.

All references to Section records are taken from the National Archives, Natural Resources Division, Record Group 121, Entry 133, “Case Files Concerning Embellishments of Federal Buildings, 1934-43,” occupying 55 linear feet of Archives shelf space. These records include copies of legal documents (contracts, payment vouchers, etc.); all correspondence between Section, artist, and community; and records of competitions. In most cases the records of Section activity are abundantly complete and well preserved. Within meticulously kept Section files, however, records of individual competitions and commissions are arranged in boxes alphabetically by state; within each state alphabetically by community; and within a community folder, in reverse chronological order. Thus the records of Kentucky murals are in Boxes 35-36, of the Jackson mural in Box 54, and records of Long’s Section activities in other states would be found in the box relevant to each state. In Box 36, the Louisville Post Office folder is empty. Henceforth, National Archives records will be cited only when a particular document is directly quoted.

Frank Long to Edward Rowan, Asst. Section Chief, 9 June 1936, Jackson, Mississippi file.

Frank Long to Sue Bridwell Beckham, 24 October 1983.

Frank Long to Edward Rowan, Asst. Section Chief, 15 August 1938, Morehead, Kentucky file.

FIGURES

1. Design for the mural in the Berea, Kentucky Post Office. While the final mural softens the outlines so that there is less of a cartoon quality, the design shows clearly the detail. The figure in the lower right hand corner represents John Jacob Niles. The pose closely resembles a portrait Long painted of the folk singer circa 1934. Niles would actually have been but about eight years old when this scene was set. Although the artist denies it, Long’s close friends insist that the mustachioed figure in the lemonade stand is Long himself. (Photograph: National Archives)
2. & 3. Twin murals in the old "Browsing Room" (now divided into offices) in the Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky. Figure 2 represents Kentucky people at traditional leisure activities. Figure 3 is a composite of rural Kentuckians at work. At one time the murals faced each other over an expanse of comfortable reading space. Alterations in the building are such that, were office space to be found elsewhere, the original space could be re-opened.

4. Elongated panel featuring Kentucky's livestock industry from the ten-mural sequence painted for the main Louisville Post Office (now a Federal Office building). (Photograph: Richard H. Beckham)

5. Crescent panel in old Louisville Post Office showing a rural mail carrier delivering mail in the mountains. One in the sequence of ten dealing with postal history and Kentuckiana industry.

6. Fourth choice of the Jackson committee in the first Jackson competition, erroneously attributed to Long and probably not the design the Section was looking at when they selected it for the Jackson Federal Building. (Photograph: National Archives)

7. Design submitted by Frank Long for the Vicksburg, Mississippi Courthouse. Depicts Vicksburg's earliest settlers arriving on the river. (Photograph: National Archives)

8. Completed mural for Crawfordsville, Indiana. The fact that Long was by this time weary with mural painting is suggested by the large numbers of figures with their backs to the audience and the general apathy in the visible faces. (Photograph: National Archives)

9. Hagerstown, Maryland murals in place in the Post Office. Long considers these some of his least successful. (Photograph: National Archives)


11. Completed mural for Morehead, Kentucky, with mother slimmed to comfortable portliness and ingenue rendered less seductive. (Photograph: National Archives)

12. Completed mural by Bert Mullins for Morgantown, Kentucky. (Photograph: National Archives)

13. Long's 1934 portrait of John Jacob Niles. Niles here is similar in pose and facial expression to his representation in the Berea mural. Note, also, the similarity of pose to the guitarist in the University of Kentucky library mural. Mountain musicians were a favorite subject of Long's, and all of his paintings of them include one figure in such a pose.